



Illinois Department of Transportation

Diversity Matters!

OCTOBER 2011

Diversity in the Workplace: A New Training Opportunity

A recent DVD training video called "*Shifting Years: Leverage the Power of Generations*" is now available at the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Policy and Research Library to those interested. The DVD program covers intergenerational relations and diversity in the workplace. The DVD is owned by the Illinois State Library and can be directly checked out by any current state employee by signing up for a free library card. To sign up, please click http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/pdf_publications/Ida137.pdf.

The general public has the opportunity to obtain items from the Illinois State Library's collection by visiting their local public library and initiating a free interlibrary loan request. For more information, contact your local library.

If you have any other questions, please contact Karen Perrin, IDOT Technical Reference Librarian at (217) 782-6680.

IDOT Intern Inspired Chicago Colleagues

"If a million words could describe the happiness and appreciation I have for this department, I could create a novel series." – IDOT intern Asia Lee. Through a job shadowing program last year, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) was introduced to Asia Lee, a senior at Mather High School on Chicago's Northwest Side.

No one could have known it at the time, but that day marked her inclusion in the IDOT family. Through the contacts made from job shadowing, the relationship between IDOT and Asia blossomed when she and three other Chicago Public Schools students were selected for an internship program in 2010.

After Asia graduated in the spring, IDOT offered her another internship for this summer. By that time, word had already

spread about Asia's intellect, skills and winning personality. As her internship progressed, Asia inspired her co-workers with her positive attitude and strong work ethic. She soon was in demand at almost every division in the department.

Although she required little supervision and never complained, her life was not easy. Asia grew up in a tough Chicago neighborhood, with few opportunities and material possessions. But she never complained or called attention to herself. You might hear Asia speak about building shelters for the homeless, but you would not know that she has lived in homeless shelters several times in her life.

After Asia's internship ended, Mather High School asked if she could use the experience to fulfill a credit requirement toward graduation. Her IDOT

supervisors enthusiastically agreed to the request.

On August 12, IDOT hosted a reception for Asia to commemorate the end of her internship and celebrate her next step as part of the freshman class this fall at Southern Illinois University (SIU) in Carbondale. To get her started on college life, IDOT staff donated gift cards, money, clothes, dorm furnishings and a new laptop computer.

But IDOT employees also gave the most important gift of all -- time. Several members in her new extended family at IDOT volunteered to drive Asia to SIU and help her move into her dorm room.

Asia might have joined the IDOT team to learn from us, but she taught us countless lessons about courage and perseverance. We wish her the best of luck on her journey.

IDOT's Recruitment and Outreach Office Maintains Busy Schedule

The Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Diversity Recruitment and Outreach (DRO) staff had a busy summer with visits statewide, including Alton, East St. Louis, Rock Island, Kankakee, Rockford, Aurora, Waukegan and Chicago. The DRO staff, led by Lesa Branham, coordinated and hosted Veterans Resource Fairs to share information on the process for submitting an employment application and testing for IDOT Highway Maintainer positions.

"The process can be confusing for potential candidates and we want to help ensure their success," said Branham, Chief of Diversity Recruitment and Outreach. "The Department of Central Management Services (CMS)

receives the application and administers the test to those who apply for the highway maintainer position. We in turn provide resources to make the process easy and efficient."

To apply and take the test for the highway maintainer position, a person must already have a Commercial Drivers License, Class A (CDL-A) with either the N endorsement (tanker) or the X endorsement (tanker with hazardous materials). The veterans preference law applies for these positions.

At the Veterans Resource Fairs, those without the required qualifications receive individualized direction on how to meet the proper license, endorsement and eligibility requirements. In

addition to IDOT, other state agencies, including the Secretary of State's CDL Division, CMS, Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) and Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) are invited to attend to provide additional information about hiring processes. Also in attendance are local Work Net Centers, CDL training schools and organizations serving veterans.

For more information about upcoming events, contact the IDOT Diversity Recruitment and Outreach office at (217) 782-2545 or email:

DOT.Outreach@illinois.gov.

IDOT and Southwestern Illinois College Host Event to Connect Metro-East Contractors with Local Graduates of Highway Training Program

In September, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Southwestern Illinois College partnered to host a "Meet & Greet" for graduates of the Highway Construction Careers Training Program (HCCTP). The event introduced students to highway construction contractors and representatives of various construction trade apprentice programs, along with IDOT officials and Southwestern Illinois College staff. The event, which was held at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, attracted about 90 participants. "We were excited and gratified by the great turnout," said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann Schneider. "This event gave graduates of the program and

contractors an opportunity to meet face to face, exchange contact information and establish a good rapport. We are hopeful the successful outcome will lead to future employment for graduates."

The construction training program is overseen by IDOT's Office of Business and Workforce Diversity's Bureau of Small Business Enterprises, with the Illinois Community College Board directly managing the program and coordinating with participating community colleges. The program aims to increase the total number of historically underutilized individuals working on IDOT highway construction projects. Each college assists trainees to become placed into Illinois' highway construction trade unions, apprenticeship programs and/or with IDOT

highway construction contractors. During the 8 to 10 week training sessions, the trainees are taught highway construction-related skills, including math for the trades, job readiness, technical skills coursework such as carpentry, blueprint reading and OSHA 10 certification.

The colleges participating in the HCCTP already have more than 500 individuals trained and ready to become productive entry-level highway construction workers. For more information about the program and participating colleges, visit <http://www.dot.il.gov/obwd/obwdprograms.html> and click on "Highway Construction Careers Training Program."

An Inside Look at IDOT's Prequalification Enhancement Committee

Members of the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Prequalification Enhancement Committee met last month to discuss the group's progress on recommendations to streamline the prequalification process, enhance communication and update prequalification rules. The implementation of the committee's recommendations is expected to result in an increase of prequalified Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms and improved business opportunities for DBE and other small businesses with IDOT. The idea of the recommendations is to find ways to improve opportunities for prequalification for disadvantaged businesses and other small businesses seeking to do business with the state.

The Prequalification Barriers Committee was established in July 2010 as a result of Senate Bill 51 (now referred to as Public Act 96-075) and IDOT's commitment to diversity and maximizing contracting op-

portunities. Chaired by Marva Boyd, IDOT Chief of Staff, the committee's objective, as outlined in the law, was to review IDOT prequalification rules, requirements and processes to determine whether the rules for prequalification operated as a barrier to minority-owned and women-owned contractor's becoming prequalified to bid on IDOT contracts. The committee consists of a diverse collaboration of IDOT staff members from various areas, including the Division of Highways, Office of Planning and Programming, Office of Business and Workforce Diversity, Office of Chief Counsel, Office of Finance and Administration and the Office of the Secretary. The committee also includes the Federal Highway Administration, representatives of minority-owned and women-owned construction and consulting firms, Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, and industry associations.

In December 2010, the committee delivered its final report and recommendations to the Secretary and Illinois General Assembly. With the

Secretary's approval of the implementation of the committee's recommendations, the committee was restructured to become the current Prequalification Enhancement Committee, extending the committee's work to include a review in greater depth of IDOT's prequalification requirements for contractors, consultants and sub-consultants. The primary focus of the new committee is the implementation of recommendations and a complete review of the prequalification requirements and process. The committee's recommendations include:

- Streamlining the prequalification process through automation
- Enhancing the communication and marketing process
- Updating minimum prequalification rules as necessary

The committee has made progress in all of the above recommendations and will update its progress in the coming weeks.

Upcoming Events

For current procurement opportunities, potential vendors can visit www.purchase.state.il.us.

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
10/14-15/11	Illinois NAACP State Convention	1201 River Drive Moline, IL	Rexie Tyson 309-787-1373
10/15/11	Goodwill Stand Down for Homeless Vets	730 S. Jefferson Peoria, IL	Vicki Hightower 312-793-0485
10/19/11	Highway Maintainer Resource Fair	2800 S. Western Chicago, IL	Consuelo Venegas 312-793-0485
10/20/11	Southwestern Illinois College Fall 2011 Job Fair	4950 Maryville Road Granite City, IL	Dave Bellm 618-296-4752
10/20/11	SWE of Northwestern Industry Day Job Fair	1818 Maple Avenue Evanston, IL	Ellen Worsdall 847-491-5173
10/27/11	IDES Vets Job Fair	1415 W. Diehl Road Naperville, IL	Rich Goulet 630-546-9658
10/29/11	2011 Men's Expo, Hosted by Senator Lightford	5700 W. Homer Chicago, IL	Deverrick Crawford 708-343-7444

To view a complete schedule of workshops offered by the Office of Business and Workforce Diversity, please visit <http://www.dot.il.gov/sbe/workshop.html>.